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November has been a month of practical archaeology. October had been devoted to intensive study of pottery, topography, spoken Arabic, and history. Now it seemed advisable to get everyone initiated into practical field work. The site of our efforts was Dhiban in Transjordan. Dhiban is the Biblical Dibon (cf. Nu. 21:30, Is. 15:2, etc.), 6 1/4 kms. south of Amman. There the famous Moabite Stone was discovered in 1868 - a monument which records the triumphs of Mesha "the Dibonite", king of Moab, over Ahab of Israel in the ninth century B.C.

It was not possible to get UNRWA aid for the sounding at Dhiban, but I estimated that the cost would not be great and the money well spent. Mr. Harding, Chief Curator of Antiquities for Jordan, was most enthusiastic about the possibilities of Dhiban. To show his interest he registered the site in the name of the Jordan Government so that the School did not have to pay a cent for the use of the site. Dhiban has long attracted the attention of archaeologists and I am sure that many will be interested, and perhaps just a little envious, when they hear that the American School has secured the rights to it - for one year at least. We here feel very grateful that the opportunity to examine it has come to us.

The excavation caravan set out from Jerusalem on November 3rd. The truck went first, loaded with the heavier camp equipment. It was followed by the station-wagon carrying personnel, personal baggage, and instruments. Then came Mr. Baramki's car. As everyone was eager to get to the 'dig', it was difficult to decide who should go and who must stay. The first group consisted of Dr. Pritchard, Mr. Baramki, Miss Mowry, Dr. Morton, and myself. In addition there was Omar, the cook, Emil, the driver, and Benny, the camp assistant. It was decided that the station-wagon would return to Jerusalem on Thursday evening, bringing back one or two members, and return to Dhiban on Saturday morning with others. In that way everyone would get an opportunity to participate.

We were pleased to find that the road south of Amman had been asphalted as far as Km. 49. (Four more kilometers have since been finished so that it is possible to travel on asphalt all the way from Jerusalem to Dhiban except for 11 kms. on either side of the Wady Wala). The three cars reached Dhiban at approximately the same time; shortly after 1 p.m. After a cold lunch, eaten in the grounds of the police post, we walked over near the mound to pick out a camp site - not an easy matter. When one was selected, the numerous spectators who had assembled were hired to clear away the stones which everywhere littered the ground. We enquired how much the rent would be for the use of the ground and the villagers replied that it was a gift. And they meant it, for no payment was ever asked.

We had brought along five tents: three for the staff, one large one to serve as a combined mess-tent and work-room, and another (kindly loaned us by the Museum) to serve as a cook-house. While the tents were being erected, Dr. Pritchard, Mr. Baramki and I walked over to the mound to select the exact spot for excavation. We knew pretty well what we wanted to do as we had already paid several visits to the mound. A wall projects above ground along the east side of the mound, and we

decided to sink two shafts alongside its outer face. In this way we hoped to learn quickly the various periods of occupation from the debris and at the same time would clear an area which could be used as a dump later when we began work inside the wall. Three contiguous squares, 5 m. each; were marked out along the wall. Our plan was to excavate squares 1 and 3 first, leaving the middle one as a means of checking our results from the first two. The "shawish" (sergeant) in charge of the police post advertised the fact that we wanted workmen and by six o'clock next morning men began flocking in. At 6.15 a.m. the excavation of Dhiban began! At 8.30 we stopped for breakfast. The bargaining over wages then began. The discussion waxed louder and louder until finally all the workmen walked off the mound and disappeared over the hill. A test of patience and wits began. Such a test was inevitable, no matter how much we offered. Finally the local John L. Lewis appeared as spokesman and negotiations were resumed. The others drifted back in twos and threes to listen and to participate in the argument. It was quite clear that everybody wanted work, but the local John L. was determined to get the highest wage possible for his men. The battle raged till eleven o'clock. Finally a bargain was struck and twenty men were hired at 25 piastres per day, this being the rate paid by the government to the workmen engaged on the highway.

After lunch the atmosphere was again disturbed when the son of a neighboring sheikh arrived with some of his tribesmen. He demanded that we fire our laborers and hire his men, and even threatened to start a riot unless we complied with his demand. In all these negotiations Mr. Baramki was our interpreter and spokesman and it was due to his skill in negotiation that our labor troubles were overcome. We finally got rid of the sheikh's son, and our men settled down to work. They were a ragged but cheerful lot. The majority were natives of Dhiban, a few were Bedawin, and three or four were refugees from Palestine. The laziest of the lot had the gift of song and this atoned for his other shortcomings. The sound of the men singing as they worked was something to be remembered. Every man carried a dagger but fortunately there was no quarrelling. Their meals were extremely frugal. How they managed to work on a lunch consisting of nothing more than a flap of thin Arab bread was something we could not understand. The Palestinian refugees slept in the open and the nights were cold. We finally procured the loan of a tent for them from UNRWA in Amman.

On the morning of the third day it was discovered that someone had disturbed the stones uncovered the previous day. He was evidently hoping to reach the buried treasure ahead of us. Anxious to stamp out at the start any meddling with the excavation, we reported the matter to the police. The shawish appeared, examined the footprints in the pit and, on this evidence, picked up a suspect and cursed him and all his ancestors to the tenth generation. With that, the matter was allowed to drop, as no serious harm had been done and the men had received a warning.

On Thursday the staff returned to Jerusalem - all except Dr. Morton who volunteered to stay and 'hold the fort.' On Saturday we returned, taking Father Murphy and Mr. Thompson. Miss Mowry remained in Jerusalem to study the sherds which had been found. The workmen missed the presence of Sitt ("Lady"), as they called her. It was she who each morning had called the roll. It was quite a sight to see Sitt exercising authority over her squad in Square 3 and shouting commands at them in Arabic. She was really very popular with the men.

On the Sunday night following our return there was a bit of excitement. A thief robbed and stabbed the proprietor of a coffee-shop just above our camp. Pritchard and I were thankful that the thief was not aware that we kept the camp money-bag in our tent. The shawish advised us to post an armed night guard. We had had one but Baramki found him curled up among the baskets and had to shout three times in his ear to waken him, so we had to fire him.

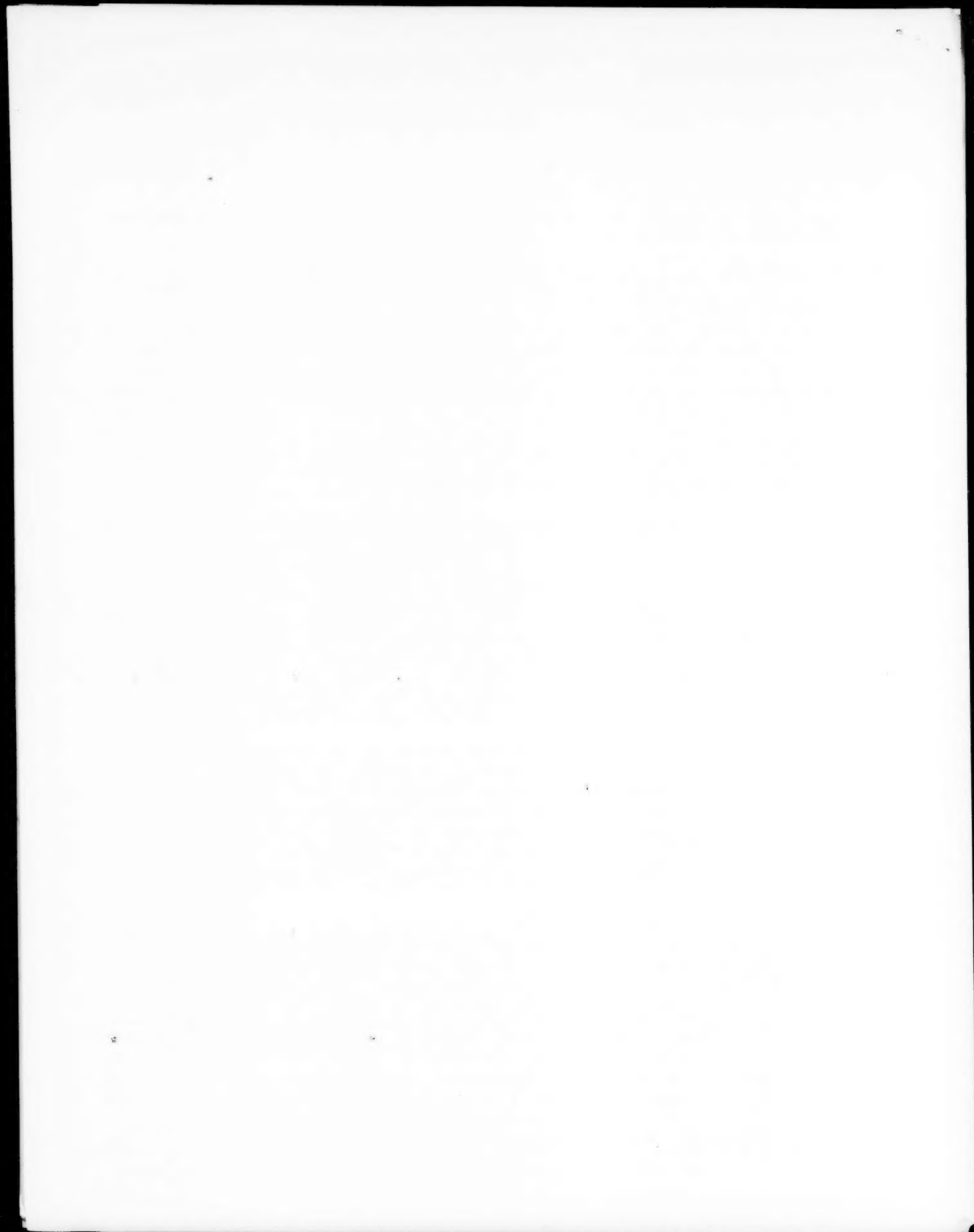
Late one afternoon Dr. Pritchard and I visited the road camp nearby and watched the men preparing their evening meal. Some were mixing up flour with salt and water, rolling it into a thin layer and spreading this over a convex metal disk placed over a fire; others had prepared a thicker, round flat cake which they baked in the hot ashes. The foreman came out and invited us in for tea. We declined but promised to come back the following night. When we returned with our colleagues, we were received by our host in his evercoat and pyjamas (doubtless the cleanest garments he had with him). He had sent all the way into Amman for apples and bananas with which to entertain us.

At the end of the second week Dr. Morton returned to Jerusalem and Mr. Ogden took his place. During this week I was able to spend only one day at Dhiban as matters at the School required my attention. Mr. Baramki also returned to Jerusalem to work on the pottery. Dr. Pritchard was left in charge, with Messrs. Murphy, Morton Thompson and Ogden to assist him. They were supposed to pull up stakes on Thursday (Thanksgiving Day) and come home, but on Wednesday an urgent phone call came, stating that they were staying until Saturday as they had made an important discovery and wished to follow it up. For the next few days they worked like beavers and succeeded in clarifying many problems which had puzzled us. A report of the sounding will doubtless appear in the Bulletin. Suffice it to say here that the walls and tower uncovered are so imposing that I doubt if we shall be able to carry out our original intention of using this excavated area as a dump.

Mr. Harding and Crown Prince Talal made an appointment to go with us on the 28th to see the results of our excavation but had to cancel the appointment at the last minute. Dhiban promises to be a site of unusual significance. Its excavation should not only reveal the history and culture of the biblical kingdom of Moab but should give us a cross-section of the whole history of Transjordan. We hope to return there in the spring, after the completion of the winter campaign at Herodian Jericho, for which we are now preparing. The Jericho campaign will probably require all our available funds. That means that for the resumption of work at Dhiban we must rely on the support of interested friends. We already have a gift of one hundred pounds, donated by the Archaeological Institute of Australia - a tribute to the interest and enthusiasm of our Honorary Fellow, John Thompson.

Thanksgiving Day was celebrated twice by some members of the School. The men at Dhiban marked the day with a dinner of poultry, partridge and pidgeon, shot by Omar the cook. The women in Jerusalem decided to postpone the School dinner until the men returned. So on Saturday night we celebrated Thanksgiving and the end of the Dhiban expedition with turkey, pumpkin pie, roasted almonds. Just as we sat down to dinner, it was announced that Miss Louise Krause and Miss Ruth Jones of Baltimore had arrived. Miss Krause's brother, Dr. Louis A.M. Krause, was medical officer with Dr. Albright's South Arabian expedition last winter. We are very happy to have them with us.

On Sunday, the seven people left at the School hired a car and drove to Nablus after church. Dr. McLaughlin of the American Mission in the Faiyum, Egypt, had sent a cane to be presented to the Samaritan high priest, so we used that as an excuse for the trip. After presenting the cane, we drove to the top of Mt. Gerizim and had a picnic lunch. From the summit of this mountain one looks down on the grove in which Jacob's Well is located, on Balata (ancient Shechem), and on Sychar, Salem and Nablus. Almost a dozen villages can be seen from its summit. To the west a light streak on the horizon marks the sands of the Mediterranean; to the east rise the blue hills of Gilead. After lunch we strolled along the top of the ridge, looking (unsuccessfully) for the seven steps by which Adam descended from Paradise when he was driven out, and for any trace of the great stairway which once led up the side of the mountain. I am convinced that the top of Mt. Gerizim would amply repay excavation. Very little has been done there yet except to clear the site of the Church of the Virgin Mary.



A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Palestine Archaeological Museum was held on November 2nd. Dr. Pritchard and I attended, and afterwards we entertained the Board to luncheon at the School. M. Seyrig flew down from Beirut for the meeting. Pere de Vaux was elected chairman of the Board.

Last Sunday Miss Jasmine Zahran, an A.M. of Columbia, invited all the members of the School to her home in Ramallah for tea. We had a very enjoyable time and met several other Arabs who were graduates of American universities. Earlier in the month Sir Hugh and Lady Dow invited Dr. Pritchard, the Baramkis, Mrs. Winnett and myself to an At Home to meet the British Consul-General for Israel.

Among recent visitors at the School were Dr. J.A. Huffman and his son, Prof. John A. Huffman, President and Vice-President respectively of the Winona Lake School of Theology, and Mr. Joseph B. Harriman of Mount Vernon, N.H.

The staff and students of the School join in sending Christmas greetings to you all at home.

F.V. Winnett, Director.